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Factors Affecting Administrative Effectiveness in Experiential Learning Activities in General Education Institutions in Vietnam

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Abstract

This research aims to identify factors affecting the administrative effectiveness of experiential learning activities in general education institutions in Vietnam. Utilizing mixed research methods including qualitative method and survey of 451 management and teaching staff nationwide. The findings reveal that there are five major factors affecting the administrative effectiveness: leadership, support policies, teachers' engagement, relationships with communities and resources for deployment. SEM analysis shows that leadership and support policies have the strongest impacts. On that basis, the author has proposed several policy recommendations to improve the administrative effectiveness of experiential learning activities in general education institutions. To be more specific, it is necessary to (1) enhance leadership and educational governance capabilities of principals, (2) issue certain policies to support experiential learning in the main educational programs, (3) promote teacher training in experiential learning activity organization, (4) develop collaborative mechanism between schools and social organizations, and (5) invest in proper facilities to ensure effectiveness in experiential activity deployment.

Keywords: *Experiential Learning, Educational Governance, Leadership, General Education Institutions.*

Introduction

In the context of globalization and industrialized revolution 4.0, education is not only about knowledge transfer, but also aims to form capabilities, qualities and soft skills for students. In Vietnam, the needs for fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education are clearly reflected in national documents such as Resolution no. 29-NQ/TW dated 2013 and the 2018 General Education Program. One of the most important directions in the new program is to develop comprehensive capabilities for students through experiential learning for life skill training, communication, cooperation, problem-solving and adaptability strengthening (Hien, N. T., & Phuong, T. T, 2024).

Experiential learning is a form of positive learning, in which learners are directly involved in goal-based activities, then on that basis, acquiring knowledge and developing their skills. According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning refers to a learning process through practice, reflection and generalization. Such a learning process not only creates a positive learning environment, but also contributes to fostering learners' creative thinking and a sense of social responsibility. In several advanced nations, experiential learning has been closely integrated into learning programs, contributing to improving education quality and developing a comprehensive individual. According to Hung, N. T. (2020), experiential learning is becoming an inevitable trend in educational reform in Vietnam, aiming to comprehensively develop students' capabilities, from practical skills to critical thinking and a civic spirit. However, organizing and

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administering these activities at general education institutions have encountered several challenges, especially in policy directions, leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration and limited resources (Ha, N. T. T., 2023). This particular paper aims to clarify factors affecting the administrative effectiveness of experiential learning and propose solutions to improve the situation in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, though the Ministry of Education and Training has directed to integrate experiential learning into the main education program; however, in fact, there still remain obstacles in the organization and administration of these activities in general education institutions. Common issues include the lack of strategic directions and specific guidelines, lack of sufficiently trained teaching staff, lack of funds, improper facilities, and especially lack of effective cooperation between schools and communities (Ha, T. T. T., 2024).

The effectiveness of experiential learning activities not only depends on the organization contents and methods, but is also remarkably subjected to the administrative mechanism at schools (Nguyen, T. T. T., & Phuong, T. T., 2023). Factors such as principals' leadership, teaching staff's collaboration, higher management's support policies, parents' and communities' engagement, as well as resource mobilization, which all play decisive roles in the success of experiential learning. However, as of now, there have been few systematic studies in Vietnam on factors affecting the administrative effectiveness in experiential learning in general education (Hien, N. T., & Phuong, T. T., 2024).

Based on that reality, this particular research aims to:

- (1) Identify major factors affecting the administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities in general education institutions in Vietnam;
- (2) Analyze the impacts of each factor through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM);
- (3) Propose solutions to improve administration, enhancing the performance of experiential learning deployment in schools.

The author hopes that the research findings not only have practical value for educational managers, principals and teachers but also contribute to building a scientific basis for planning experiential learning policies in the current period of innovation.

Literature Review

Theories on Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory (ELT), first developed by David A. Kolb (1984), is among the fundamental theoretical frameworks with extensive impacts in modern education, especially in learner-centered training program design. Kolb states that learning is a process in which knowledge is formed during experience conversion. Instead of passively acquiring knowledge, learners proactively experience reality, then reflecting, generalizing and applying what they have learned in reality.

Kolb's learning model is a four-stage cycle:

Concrete Experience: learners directly participate in a specific activity.

Reflective Observation: learners think about that experience, acknowledging successful and ineffective factors.

Abstract Conceptualization: learners form theories, concepts or rules on the basis of the experiences they have reflected.

Active Experimentation: learners apply what they have acquired in a new situation, creating a continuous learning cycle.

Kolb (1984) emphasizes that effective learners are those who are able to move flexibly between these four stages, and that each individual has a different learning style depending on how they approach and process information from experience.

According to Thang, M. D. (2020), this theory has been widely applied in general education, higher education and vocational training, helping students develop critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork and self-learning skills. In the context of general education in Vietnam today, integrating experiential learning theory into teaching and educational activities is one of the key solutions to shift from content-oriented education to competency-based education.

Theories on Educational Governance

According to Dat, T. V.(2023), Educational Governance is an important field of study and practice in educational science, especially in the context of increasingly complex educational systems, influenced by many factors from macro policies, grassroots management to social, cultural and economic impacts. According to Bush (2008), educational governance is a systematic decision-making process to set goals, allocate resources and monitor the effectiveness of educational activities to ensure the sustainable development of schools and learners.

Modern educational governance theory not only focuses on traditional administrative-control mechanisms but also emphasizes a decentralized approach, enhancing autonomy, transparency and participation of stakeholders such as teachers, parents, communities and students (Hien, N. T. T., & Phuong, T. T, 2023). According to Trinh, T. M.(2024), governance is “the interaction between state and non-state actors to jointly solve public problems.” In the educational environment, this involves schools building collaborative relationships with stakeholders to mobilize resources and enhance accountability.

According to Nguyen (2021), educational governance theory provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing the effectiveness of organizing, operating and developing experiential learning activities in general schools, contributing to ensuring the sustainability and ability to replicate the model in practice..

Theories on Administrative Effectiveness in Experiential Learning Activities in General Education Institutions

In the context of comprehensive educational innovation today, experiential learning activities are considered an indispensable component of the general education program, contributing to the formation and development of comprehensive qualities and capacities for students (Hien, N. T., & Phuong, T. T, 2024). However, for these activities to be effective, there needs to be a suitable and flexible management system that meets the requirements of organization, coordination and supervision in the specific conditions of each school.

According to Bush (2008), educational governance is not limited to administrative functions, but extends to include strategic decision making, resource allocation, human resource development and effective control of activities. Applied to the context of experiential learning, administration needs to cover all three aspects: (1) planning and operation orientations, (2)

implementation with various stakeholders' engagement, and (3) continuous monitoring, assessment and innovation.

In general education institutions, experiential learning activities often include programs such as field trips, production work, career-orientation activities, life skills, community activities, etc. Each of these activities requires effective management from the school board, including the following capabilities: program design appropriate to students' ages, abilities of students and local conditions, coordination with homeroom teachers and organizations, connection with the community, as well as mobilization and effective use of resources (Nguyen, 2021).

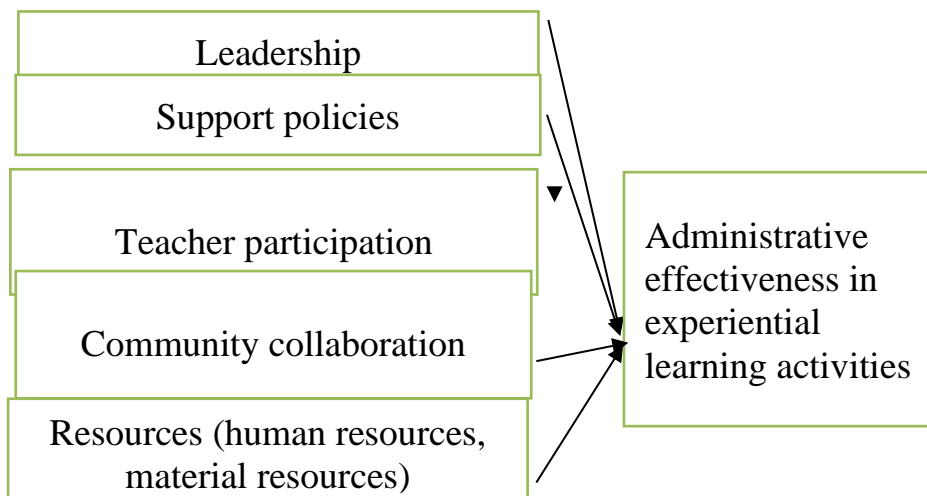
One of the theories that can be applied to explain the administrative effectiveness in organizing experiential learning activities is the Adaptive Governance Theory. This theory argues that in constantly changing contexts, especially in innovative education, schools need to be able to adjust their organizational structures, decision-making methods and mobilize relationships to adapt to reality (Folke, C., 2005). With its diverse, flexible and often non-standard characteristics, experiential learning requires a highly adaptive governance model, in which the principal acts as a "strategic coordinator" and the teacher is the "learning activity designer".

In addition, instructional leadership theory is also important. According to Hallinger (2011), the instructional leadership theory emphasizes the role of educational managers in orienting learning goals, providing professional support to teachers, and ensuring that all activities in the school are geared towards the development of learners. Therefore, the effective organization of experiential learning depends largely on the professional leadership capacity and the vision of comprehensive student development of the principal and the teaching staff.

In short, the theory of managing experiential learning activities in general education institutions is an integration of many modern management approaches such as adaptive governance, transformational leadership, and instructional leadership. These theories help to explain how factors such as leadership, support policies, teacher participation, community, and resources, etc., together affect the effectiveness of implementing experiential learning activities in schools.

Research Model

On the basis of previous studies, the author recommend the following research model:



Research model: Factors affecting administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities (author's recommendation)

Description of the Research Model:

Independent variables include five factors:

Leadership: a set of knowledge, skills, qualities and attitudes of a leader in orienting, organizing, operating and evaluating the activities of an educational organization to achieve the set goals.

Support policies: a collection of policies, legal documents, mechanisms and resources issued by the State, the Ministry of Education and Training, local authorities or educational institutions to facilitate the organization, management and development of experiential learning activities in schools. These policies not only help improve the effectiveness of educational governance but also promote innovation in teaching methods, develop practical capacity and qualities of students in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Teacher participation: teachers are not only the ones who impart knowledge, but also the ones who design, organize, guide and accompany students in experiential learning activities. In the context of current educational innovation, the role of teachers is increasingly expanding from "teachers" to "creators of learning environments", especially learning environments through practical experiences. Experiential learning requires a strong shift in teachers' thinking and actions, from traditional teaching to organizing learning activities linked to reality, increasing students' initiative and stimulating creativity.

Community collaboration: the process by which educational institutions build and maintain collaborative relationships with organizations and individuals outside the school — including families, businesses, social organizations, local governments, and production facilities — to facilitate students' participation in practical learning activities in real living and working environments..

Resources (human resources, material resources): experiential learning requires a flexible, creative and practical learning environment. To ensure effective organization, resources — especially human and material resources — play a central role, both as a prerequisite and as a decisive factor for the quality and sustainability of experiential learning activities.

These factors are conceptualized and used to design the questionnaire with 15 observed variables.

The dependent variable is the administrative effectiveness of experiential learning activities, which refers to the level at which experiential learning activities are organized, administered and assessed in a proper way and in line with the learning goals, bringing practical values to learners and contributing to comprehensive development of students' capabilities in the school environment. The dependent variables include the extent to which experiential learning goals are achieved, systematic and appropriate organization, active participation of stakeholders, flexibility and innovation in management methods, and sustainability and scalability.

These factors are conceptualized and used to design the questionnaire with 23 observed variables.

The total observed variables are 38.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This particular research uses the mixed research method, to be more specific:

Qualitative research method: researching scientific projects related to the administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities and the impacts of the factors (leadership, support policies, teacher participation, community collaboration and resources (human and material resources)) on the administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities.

Quantitative research: surveying 462 individuals and receiving 451 responses from teachers and managing staff from 30 schools (97.61%).

Data Analysis Tools

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

The questionnaire is designed based on theoretical frameworks and tested using Cronbach's Alpha > 0.814 . To be more specific:

No.	Factors	Number of observed variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Evaluation of reliability
1	Leadership	6	0.871	Excellent
2	Support policies	4	0.844	Excellent
3	Teacher participation	5	0.849	Excellent
4	Community collaboration	4	0.814	Excellent
5	Resources	5	0.890	Excellent
6	Administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities	6	0.876	Excellent (dependent variable)

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Testing Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Coefficient	Value
KMO coefficient	0.869
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-square = 1442.715
df (degrees of freedom)	229
Sig. (p-value)	0.000

Table 2. KMO And Bartlett's Test Coefficient

Table 2 shows that the KMO coefficient > 0.7 , which means the collected data is appropriate for EFA, and Sig. < 0.05 , indicating the factor analysis is appropriate.

Factor extraction and rotation method: the research uses the extraction method of Principal Component Analysis and the rotation method of Varimax. The criteria for factor selection is Eigenvalue > 1 and Factor loading ≥ 0.5 .

Factors	Remaining factors	Eigenvalue	Average Variance Extracted (%)*
Leadership	5	3.145	17.3%
Support policies	4	2.722	15.8%
Teacher participation	5	2.519	14.9%
Community collaboration	4	2.145	12.1%
Resources	5	1.867	11.2%
Administrative effectiveness	6	2.688	16.3%

Table 3. Factor Extraction And Rotation Results

The Average variance extracted is 78.5%, indicating that the model can well explain the observed variables. All observed variables have factor loading > 0.5 , showing that they are well representative for each factor.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis Results

Description Of SEM:

Dependent variable: Administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities

Independent variables: Leadership, Support policies, Teacher participation, Community collaboration, Resources

Fit Index	Value	Acceptance level	Evaluation
Chi-Square/df	1.752	< 3	Good
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	0.904	> 0.90	Accepted
AGFI	0.867	> 0.85	Accepted
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.926	> 0.90	Good
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.911	> 0.90	Good
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.056	< 0.08	Good

Table 4. Model Fit Index

In general, the model is well in line with the real data.

Relationship	Estimated coefficient (β)	p value	Conclusion
Leadership \rightarrow Administrative effectiveness	0.344	< 0.001	Statistically significant
Support policies \rightarrow Administrative effectiveness	0.218	0.006	Statistically significant
Teacher participation \rightarrow Administrative effectiveness	0.243	< 0.001	Statistically significant
Community collaboration \rightarrow Administrative effectiveness	0.176	0.021	Statistically significant
Resources \rightarrow Administrative effectiveness	0.341	$<$	Statistically significant

Relationship	Estimated coefficient (β)	p value	Conclusion
		0.001	significant

Table 5. Standardized Path Coefficients

Table 5 shows that all relationships are statistically significant (with $p < 0.05$)

Dependent variable	R ²	Explanation
Administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities	0.682	Model can explain 68.2% variance

Table 6. Coefficient Of Determination (R²) For Dependent Variable

Table 6 illustrates that SEM is well appropriate and all independent variables have remarkable impacts on the administrative effectiveness. Among the variables, leadership, support policies and teacher participation have the strongest impacts.

Research Findings and Discussion

Sample Description

315/451 respondents (69.84%) think that experiential learning has positive impacts on students.

202/451 respondents (44.78%) think that their schools are well administering experiential learning.

Major Affecting Factors

SEM results show that the levels of impacts of independent variables on the Administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities in the descending order as follows:

- (1) Leadership: $\beta = 0.40$
- (2) Support policies: $\beta = 0.32$
- (3) Teacher participation: $\beta = 0.31$
- (4) Community collaboration: $\beta = 0.28$
- (5) Resources (human resources, material resources): $\beta = 0.26$

The results indicate that leadership plays a key role in the effective implementation of experiential learning. However, many schools still lack specific guidance from upper management and face financial and physical constraints. On the other hand, teachers are often not properly trained in experiential learning methods, and community mobilization is lacking in a systematic manner.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are five major factors affecting the administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities, including Leadership, Support policies, Teacher participation, Community collaboration and Resources (human resources, material resources).

In terms of policy implications, to improve the administrative effectiveness in experiential learning activities, general education institutions need to:

(1) Enhance principals' leadership and educational governance

(2) Issue specific policies to support experiential learning in the main education program

(3) Train teachers on methods to organize experiential learning activities

(4) Develop a collaborative mechanism between schools and community organizations

(5) Invest in appropriate facilities to effectively implement these activities.

There are still limitations in this research, including limited number of administered questionnaires though it can still ensure reliability, but a higher number would be better. Besides, the author has not been able to use some research methods that also fits the nature of the research such as expert method or in-depth interview.

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